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ABSTRACT

All community and junior colleges in Michigan were invited to participate in a survey whose primary function was to assess current perceptions of counseling functions at Michigan community and junior colleges. Full-time counselors, faculty, and administrators were requested to express their opinions on the importance and quality of 10 counseling functions performed by the counseling staff at their respective institutions. In addition, participants were asked to compare counselors to other employee groups on their campus in relation to certain job conditions. Finally, respondents indicated their perception of the overall image of counseling on campus. Study findings, based on an analysis of 1,507 completed questionnaires representing 23 institutions, included the following: (1) 75% of the responding colleges had centralized counseling centers; (2) all three groups surveyed shared the same perception of what constituted the top three counseling functions; i.e., academic advising, orientation and registration, and career counseling; (3) only one-third of the counselors thought academic advising should receive more priority than it presently had, while half of the administrators and two-thirds of the faculty believed it should have higher priority; (4) over two-thirds of both the administrators and faculty believed recruiting and marketing should have higher priority; (5) all three groups were in agreement that "administrative functions," "teaching," and "responsibilities to college" were the least important functions; (6) 42% of the faculty and 43% of the administrators felt the number of counselors on their campuses was too low; and (7) the overall image of counseling services on the 23 campuses was generally perceived as adequate. The survey instrument is appended. (EJV)

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COUNSELING FUNCTIONS: PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

MICHIGAN COMMUNITY/JUNIOR COLLEGES

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JC 870496

All community and junior colleges in Michigan were invited to participate in a survey whose primary purpose was to assess current perceptions of counseling functions at Michigan Community/ Junior Colleges. Twenty-three community and junior colleges (Attachment A) took part in the survey which was endorsed by both the Michigan College Personnel Association Executive Board and the Michigan Association of Community College Student Personnel Administrators.

Full time counselors, faculty, and administrators were requested to express their opinions on 10 counseling functions performed by the counseling staff at their respective institutions. Ratings were requested in 3 different areas for each of the 10 counseling functions. In addition, participants were asked to compare counselors to other employee groups on their campus in relation to certain job conditions. Finally, respondents indicated their perception of the overall image of counseling on their individual campus (Attachment B).

Each participating college via the Director of Counseling will receive two reports. First a composite report will be provided with summary data/results from all 23 colleges (October 1986). Second, an individual college report containing data from that particular college was provided in May 1986.

DATA COLLECTION

During the late Fall of the 1985-86 academic year questionnaires were mailed to all 23 participating colleges for distribution to full time counselors, faculty, and administrators. A liaison person was designated for each campus. The liaison was responsible for distributing, collecting, and returning the survey forms. Also, this person was responsible for completing a one page demographic sheet for that particular institution (Attachment C).

A total of 1507 questionnaires were completed and returned. The response rates are noted below:

	Number Responding	Number Distributed	Response Rate
Counselors	151	213	70.9%
Faculty	1003	2509	40%
Administrators	353	660	53.5%

Given the populations' sizes, these levels of response lead to a high level of confidence in yielding statistically significant results.

The Research and Development Department of Delta College provided a great deal of assistance in the completion of this report.

FINDINGS

I. Characteristics of Michigan Community and Junior College Counselors (Attachment C)

- A. Fully 70% of the junior and community colleges reported that full time counselors work a 10 to 12 month contract in a calendar year. Almost 44% of the colleges surveyed responded that counselors work a 10 month contract.
- B. Over 91% of the responding colleges reported that counselors work 35 to 40 hours in a "normal" work week. Almost 44% of the colleges responded that counselors work a minimum of 40 hours in the "normal" work week.
- C. Centralized counseling centers exist in 3 out of 4 of the responding institutions.
- D. The minimum academic credential for community and junior college counselors in all 23 participating colleges is a Master's Degree. In addition, 74% of these colleges require that the graduate degree be in Counseling.
- E. The colleges surveyed report very few paraprofessional counselors in their counseling centers. Only 1 part-time and 11 full-time paraprofessionals were reported in the entire survey.
- F. Almost 62% of the counselors in the participating institutions have between 11 to 25 years of experience in counseling at that particular college. At least 5 years of experience are reported for 77% of the counselors in the survey.
- G. One out of 4 counselors is over the age of 50. Over 18% of the counselors are minorities. Almost 45% of the counselors are women.

II. Counseling Functions (Attachment D)

- A. All three groups surveyed (counselors, faculty, administrators) share the same perception of what currently constitutes the top three counseling functions. These three functions are ACADEMIC ADVISING, ORIENTATION AND REGISTRATION, and CAREER COUNSELING. At least 70% of all three group respondents rated these three functions as a 4 or 5. However, there were some marked differences in their perceptions of what priority/emphasis these functions should have as well as the quality of these functions.
 1. Only one third of the counselors think academic advising should receive more priority whereas over half of the administrators and two thirds of the faculty believe it needs higher priority. 52% of the faculty, 40% of the administrators, but only 19% of the counselors believe the academic advising function needs to be improved.

2. Although the quality of orientation and registration function was viewed similarly by all three groups, a greater percent of counselors thought this function should receive somewhat less priority.
 3. 71% of the counselors believed the quality of career counseling was adequate to excellent whereas only half of the faculty and administrators agreed.
- B. Perceptions appear to differ the most with the two counseling functions of RECRUITING/MARKETING and RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEGE.
1. Over two thirds of both the administrators and faculty believe recruiting/marketing should have a higher priority and only approximately 5% of these respondents think the priority should be lower whereas 31% of the counselors think the priority should be lower. Over 85% of the counselors feel the quality is adequate as is whereas almost half of each of the other two groups perceive this function to need improvement.
 2. 16% of the administrators, 18% of the faculty, but only 1% of the counselors believe responsibilities to college is currently not a very important function. One quarter of the counselors think this function should have a lower priority. Interestingly enough, 42% of the counselors feel this function needs to be improved whereas only 27% of the faculty and administrators agreed.
- C. The only counseling function that received a higher evaluation (quality) rating by both faculty and administrators than the rating counselors gave themselves was PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. This appears to be particularly significant in as much as over two thirds of the counselors believe this function should have a greater priority (it is ranked #1 in their Should Be area) and half of the counselor group feels this function needs improvement.
- D. Perceptual similarities among all three groups were evident with the ASSESSMENT function. Its current importance ranked 5th or 6th (middle position), all three groups would like to see it receive a slightly higher priority, almost a third of all respondents believe some improvement is needed.
- E. All three groups also seem to be in agreement as to the three functions currently the least important - ADMINISTRATIVE, TEACHING, and RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEGE. They also apparently agree that administrative and teaching functions should maintain these low priorities but responsibilities to college should be somewhat higher.
- F. The counselor group thinks the PERSONAL COUNSELING function should have a higher priority than what it is currently.

Almost 40% of the counselors also agree that this function needs to be improved. It was somewhat surprising that almost 28% of the counselors believe that the personal counseling function is currently less than moderately important.

- G. As a group, administrators evaluated (quality ratings) eight of the counseling functions higher than the faculty group. The only two functions that faculty rated higher were personal counseling and professional development.
- H. A significant percent (at least one fifth) of both the faculty and administration group reported "no knowledge" on four of the ten counseling functions.
 - ADMINISTRATIVE: 35% faculty, 45% administrators
 - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: 40% faculty, 29% administrators
 - TEACHING: 28% faculty, 24% administrators
 - PERSONAL COUNSELING: 23% faculty, 23% administratorsThe only four counseling functions that at least 85% of both faculty and administrator groups felt they had enough knowledge/awareness of to evaluate were: ACADEMIC ADVISING, CAREER/VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, ORIENTATION AND REGISTRATION, and RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEGE.

III. Perceptions of Counselors Relative to Other Groups On Campus

- A. Weekly hours and salary/compensation of counselors were rated by all three groups as about right.
 - 1. Approximately 20% of the faculty responded that they had no knowledge of hours worked by counselors or the salary counselors made in their respective institutions.
- B. Faculty (42%) and administrators (43%) viewed the number of counselors on their campus as low in number. Fully 71% of the counselors responding felt more strongly that the numbers of counselors were too low or few.
 - 1. Another 12% of the faculty reported no knowledge of the numbers of counselors relative to other groups on campus.
- C. Workload was perceived by 58% of the counselors as being too high. This perception was not shared by faculty or administrators.
 - 1. Half (50%) of the faculty perceived workload as about right for counselors. Another 20% of the faculty responding had no knowledge of counselors' workload.
 - 2. One out of three administrators viewed counselors' workload as about right. Another 37% of the administrators felt that the workload was too low.

- IV. The overall image of counseling services on the 23 junior and community college campuses was generally perceived as adequate by all 3 groups of counselors, faculty, and administrators.

1. Three out of 4 counselors rated counseling services on their campus as adequate or good.
2. Over half (56%) of the faculty rated counseling services as adequate on their campus while another 30% viewed counseling as marginal.
3. An adequate rating was given to counseling services by 64% of the administrators in the survey. Another 25% perceived counseling as marginal.

SUMMARY

A review of the literature revealed very little dealing with perceptions of community college counselors and counseling services. There were no studies found that involved surveying counselors, faculty, and administrators on a statewide level. The composite results of this survey and the individual institution report are intended to provide data that can be utilized by each of Michigan's junior and community colleges in such areas as planning and professional development efforts.

PARTICIPATING COLLEGES

-23-

ALPENA
BAY DE NOC
C.S. MOTT
DELTA
GLEN OAKS
GOGEBIC
GRAND RAPIDS
HENRY FORD
HIGHLAND PARK
KALAMAZOO VALLEY
KELLOGG
KIRTLAND
LAKE MICHIGAN
LANSING
MACOMB
MID MICHIGAN
MONTCALM
NORTHWESTERN MICH
OAKLAND
SCHOOLCRAFT
SOUTHWESTERN MICH
WASHTENAW
WAYNE COUNTY

COUNSELING PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

*Please read directions on reverse side

COUNSELING FUNCTIONS	CURRENT IMPORTANCE					SHOULD BE					QUALITY					
	Not important		Moderately important		Very important	Much lower priority		Same priority as now		Much higher priority	Needs major improvement		Adequate as is		Excellent now	No knowledge
ACADEMIC ADVISING (educational counseling, course selection, transfer information, graduation requirements)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	X
ADMINISTRATIVE (reports, correspondence, research, supervision of students and interns)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	X
ASSESSMENT (administration and interpretation of achievement placement, personality or interest tests)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	X
CAREER/VOCATIONAL COUNSELING (life planning and career decisions)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	X
ORIENTATION & REGISTRATION (new student scheduling, financial aid, basic college information)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	X
PERSONAL COUNSELING (adjustment, developmental and interpersonal problems)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	X
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (reading or writing professional articles, attending seminars, workshops)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	X
RECRUITING/MARKETING (high school visits, college nights)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	X
RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEGE (faculty and staff contacts, committees, staff meetings)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	X
TEACHING (seminars, workshops, credit courses as part of regular duties)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	X

What is your perception of counselors relative to other employee groups on your campus?

	too high/many		about right		too low/few		no knowledge
	1	2	3	4	5	X	
Work Load	1	2	3	4	5	X	
Compensation/salary	1	2	3	4	5	X	
Weekly hours working	1	2	3	4	5	X	
Number of Counselors	1	2	3	4	5	X	

In your opinion, what is the composite/overall image of counseling services on your campus?

Poor	Marginal	Adequate	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

COUNSELING PERCEPTIONS SURVEY
Demographic Data Sheet

ATTACHMENT C
MACCSPA and MCPA endorsed

COMPOSITE- 23 COLLEGES

COLLEGE _____
YOUR NAME _____
TITLE _____
PHONE (_____) _____
AREA CODE _____

- A. Characteristics of counseling staff members (please indicate number of personnel in each box)

	Full Time	Part Time	Males	Females	Ethnic Minorities	Ages			Years at Your College				
						30 & Under	31 - 50	51 - 70	0 - 4	5 - 10	11 - 16	17 - 25	26 +
Counselors	157	29	115	83	34	7	104	44	25	28	47	69	0
Para-Professionals (non students non clerical)	11	1	2	9	2	4	7	1	8	1	2	1	0

- B. Which best describes the length of annual/normal contract for your full time counselors (excluding breaks/vacations/supplemental or overload time)?
6 8 or 9 months 10 10 months 1 11 months 5 12 months 1 No Response
- C. How many clock hours are counselors expected to work in a "normal" week?
10 40 or more hours 11 35-39 hours 2 30-34 hours 0 25-29 hours 0 24 or less
- D. Which best describes the location/structure of counseling services on your campus?
18 centralized counseling center/offices
5 decentralized counseling offices
0 no identifiable counseling office/department exists
- E. What is the minimum academic credential required to be a counselor at your campus?
17 Master's degree in Counseling 6 Master's degree 0 Bachelor's degree
- F. What is the minimum academic credential required to be a para-professional/counseling assistant at your campus?
3 Master's degree 5 Associate degree
3 Bachelor's degree 2 no post-secondary degree required
10 No Response

1986

COUNSELING PERCEPTIONS SURVEY
Item Rankings (based on mean averages)

COUNSELING FUNCTIONS	CURRENT IMPORTANCE			SHOULD BE			QUALITY		
	Counselors	Faculty	Administrators	Counselors	Faculty	Administrators	Counselors	Faculty	Administrators
Academic Advising	1	2	1	9	2	4	1	9	3
Administrative	10	9	9	10	9	9	9	6	6
Assessment	5	6	6	4	5	3	5	8	7
Career/Vocational Counseling	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	4	5
Orientation and Registration	2	1	2	7	4	5	2	1	1
Personal Counseling	6	5	7	2	6	8	7	4	8
Professional Development	9	8	8	1	8	7	10	7	10
Recruiting/Marketing	7	4	4	5	1	2	8	10	9
Responsibilities to College	4	7	5	6	7	6	4	2	4
Teaching	8	10	10	8	10	10	6	3	2

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